

17 November 1970

DCI BRIEFING FOR  
19 November NSC MEETING

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THE WARSAW PACT FORCES

I. Mr. President, the Soviets have developed a basic plan for a conflict in the NATO Central Region--the area between northern Germany and the Austrian border--which calls for the mobilization and organization of Warsaw Pact forces in two echelons. Under this plan, the Soviets and their allies maintain large, ready forces to make up the first echelon. The components of the second echelon are at a lower level of readiness, and would need up to three weeks to mobilize and deploy.

A. Without further mobilization, there are almost 600,000 Warsaw Pact troops stationed in Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia--including 45 divisions with almost 11,000 tanks.

1. These forces are opposed by more than 700,000 NATO troops, comprising 22 and one-third divisions with some 5,000 tanks.

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B. Units of the second echelon, coming from the western Soviet Union, would have to be filled out with large numbers of reservists and civilian vehicles.

1. Some of the combat elements of these forces could arrive in Poland and Czechoslovakia within five or six days after the start of mobilization.
2. It would take at least three weeks, however, to complete the organization and deployment of the two echelons for a coordinated offensive.

C. The mobilization plan, after about 21 days, would increase the total Pact forces in position to attack the NATO Central Region to about 81 divisions with some 1,200,000 men, approximately 19,000 tanks, and about 4,000 aircraft.

D. The Soviets probably consider the most favorable conflict situation for them to be one in which the Pact forces could mobilize and attack before NATO has enough time to mobilize.

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1. We would expect, however, to detect the beginnings of a full mobilization of Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces within the first week.
2. If NATO then began to mobilize, in the remaining time required to complete the Soviet build-up NATO could bring its total strength to about 1,600,000 troops.
3. This NATO force would comprise 27 and one-third divisions--counting on five French divisions--and some 7,200 tanks and 2,600 aircraft.

E. A simple comparison of the numbers of opposing divisions tends to be misleading in this case. Soviet divisions have much less manpower than NATO divisions. A Soviet tank division, for example, has about 8,000 men and 310 tanks, while a U.S. armored division has about 18,000 men and 324 tanks.

1. Thus NATO, at corresponding stages of mobilization, would have fewer divisions in readiness, but more men than the Warsaw Pact forces.

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2. The Communist divisions, however, would be considerably stronger in total armor. In the area under consideration, the Pact keeps almost all of its tanks in active units, while NATO keeps a large share of its armor in reserve stocks, unassigned.

II. We believe that the USSR is deterred from an attack on NATO within the foreseeable future by a combination of factors. These include the risk that even a limited conflict could develop into a general nuclear war threatening the Soviet state, and the possibility that they might not achieve their objectives or be forced to sustain unacceptable losses. The Soviets may also distrust some of their allies, as well as the Chinese.

III. The Soviet and other Warsaw Pact forces facing NATO have the basic objective of defending their territories against direct military threats, and of maintaining Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.

A. Nevertheless, the Warsaw Pact is a large and modern military force which could be used to

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threaten or attack NATO if a crisis leads to hostilities.

B. If fighting erupted, or if both sides mobilized, the Soviets would prepare to attack the NATO Central Region. If the Soviets anticipated a theater nuclear war, they could be expected to launch supporting nuclear strikes with tactical and strategic weapons allocated to theater commanders.

C. There is some disagreement as to whether the Soviets plan to attack the areas north and south of the Central Region either concurrent with, or independent of, an attack in the Central Region.

1. The Soviets may perceive that a rapid and successful campaign in the Central Region would enable them to control Scandinavia without invasion and occupation. Further, it is not likely that the Soviets would consider the gains of involvement in Scandinavia worth the risk of becoming bogged down in a land campaign there, to the possible detriment of the Central Region effort.

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2. On the other hand, the Soviets may consider Norway the key to Soviet air and naval routes to the Atlantic. If so, they would assume the risks involved in seizing the area.
3. There is also uncertainty about the likelihood of an independent or concurrent attack on the NATO southern flank. In any case, Greek and Turkish forces could probably defend against the Pact forces normally deployed there. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, believe that a concurrent attack is likely and that additional allied troops would be required to defend this strategic area.
4. Neither NATO nor the Warsaw Pact maintains large military forces on the borders in the northern or the southern regions, and no open incidents or provocations have occurred there in recent years.

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IV. Soviet planners envisage a nuclear war in Europe, even though it may be conventional at the outset. The USSR is estimated to have between 5,900 and 8,600 tactical nuclear warheads allocated for Europe.

A. About one half of these are warheads for tactical missiles in Europe and the western USSR, and for medium range missiles in the western USSR.

B. The remainder are allocated to medium bombers and tactical air forces. The Soviets have nuclear weapons storage sites at a few airfields in Eastern Europe, [REDACTED]

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V. NATO has about 9,400 nuclear warheads committed for use in Europe. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Compared to the Pact, NATO forces have a much greater range of nuclear weapons--including tube artillery rounds and atomic demolition munitions.

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A. There is, however, no assurance for either side that waging war in Europe with nuclear weapons would result in a favorable outcome.

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POLITICAL VIEWS ON MBFR

I. As for the attitudes of the nations involved in the proposal for Mutual Balanced Force Reduction, the Soviets virtually ignored the first NATO soundings, although Moscow in the past had advocated various schemes for regional disarmament in Europe.

A. This reticence was based in part on Russia's concern that any such agreement could be criticized by Asian Communists as a form of indirect assistance to the U.S. effort in Vietnam.

1. With the Czechoslovak incident still fresh, the Soviets also were concerned that mutual balanced force reductions might work to the detriment of their political and security interests in Eastern Europe.

2. The Soviets at the time appeared convinced that the United States forces

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in Europe would in any event be reduced unilaterally, without East-West agreement.

B. The first positive Soviet response appeared in the Budapest memorandum of June, 1970.

1. This Warsaw Pact document suggested that talks aimed at reduction of "foreign" forces in Europe could be undertaken either by machinery to be established at a conference on European security, or in any other forum acceptable to all interested parties.
2. This proposal was aimed at maximum tactical advantage for Moscow. It differed sufficiently from the NATO suggestions so that the Soviets could refer to their "own" proposals, and thus avoid conceding an initiative to the West.
3. At the same time, it was designed to increase NATO interest in a European Security conference, which the Soviets would prefer to precede talks on mutual force reductions.

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C. A more fundamental reason for Moscow's shift to a more positive response may have been the desire to avoid appearing negative on any disarmament issue.

II. NATO consideration of the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction concept in recent months has moved from concentration on theoretical model-building to discussions on how best to pursue the dialogue with the Warsaw Pact nations.

A. The early NATO statements had served mainly as counter-proposals to the Warsaw Pact calls for a conference on European Security.

1. As long as there were no positive answers from the Communist side, NATO studies filled in the time drawing up bilateral reduction schemes which were somewhat unrealistic in that they envisaged cutting back in areas where the Pact had an advantage, while preserving full Allied security.

2. The Alliance now is giving more serious attention to the problem of drafting force reduction proposals which stand

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a chance of being negotiable with the Soviet Union.

B. Most Allies believe that NATO should de-emphasize work on formulas which call for reduction of forces on Soviet territory.

1. They also doubt the value of further examination of reductions entailing substantially larger Pact than NATO cutbacks.
2. Similarly, the senior Allied political advisers will now study various overt verification measures, trying to assess their political acceptability to both the Pact and NATO.

C. NATO nations now appear quite interested in the Pact's offer to explore reductions in stationed or "foreign" forces.

1. They generally agree that NATO should-- in continuing the dialogue with the Warsaw Pact--incorporate some mention of the foreign forces approach.
2. The Allies feel quite strongly, however, that reductions in foreign forces should be tied directly to eventual cutbacks of indigenous forces.

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D. The Allies have remained flexible about the proper forum for any force reduction negotiations.

1. If and when this point becomes critical, each Ally will want to assure that its own interests are protected in any negotiations, and presumably many will want a direct role in the talks.
2. A conference on European security is not generally regarded as suitable for MBFR negotiations per se.
3. Nevertheless, the Allies seem to agree that NATO should not consent to the convening of a security conference if it would not deal with the question of when and how force reduction talks could take place.

III. To date, the West German, British, and Italian governments have demonstrated the greatest interest in Mutual Balanced Force Reduction.

A. Bonn recently reaffirmed its long-standing support, both for the concept's own sake,

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and as a counter to Communist pressures for a security conference.

- B. The British have advocated exploration of the foreign forces approach, probably influenced by the economies such reductions might entail for them; but their recent studies have made them dubious as to whether any MBFR approach which would be negotiable with the Pact would be acceptable to NATO.
- C. The Italians have been working hard to stake out a role in any eventual force reduction talks, and might be hoping that Rome could be the site of any negotiations.
- D. The French remain aloof from NATO work on MBFR--which French Defense Minister Debré has called "terribly boring"--but if there is increased movement toward force reduction talks, Paris is likely to want to be involved.
  - 1. The Pact undoubtedly would insist that the French forces stationed in Germany be included in the reductions, and so French participation would be crucial.

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E. The Dutch continue to be the most skeptical of the Allies, supporting continued study of models requiring greater Pact than NATO reductions, and turning a cold shoulder to the foreign forces approach.

F. The other Allies can be expected to go along with the general lines of the NATO approach.

1. Turkey, Greece, and Portugal will tend to be more cautious than the remaining small Allies.

2. Canadian interest--both in detente and in cutbacks in Ottawa's own military efforts--will dictate continued support for MBFR, with an inclination toward the foreign forces approach as a first step.

IV. There are a number of factors which suggest that the Allies will continue to favor NATO advocacy of Mutual Balanced Force Reduction. These are: First, the general desire for an improvement in East-West relations, and the feeling that force reductions would be a decisive step forward for detente;

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Second, the public pressures for cuts in defense spending;

Third, the search for ways to delay or prevent U.S. troop cuts, and failing that, to put them in the more palatable context of mutual reductions; and

Fourth, the general Allied belief that MBFR proposals lend substance and credibility to the Western side of the East-West dialogue.

V. The NATO Allies are not likely, however, to go overboard in their pursuit of a force reduction agreement.

- A. Their caution will be dictated primarily by recognition of NATO's continued dependence on the deterrent effect of the American conventional and nuclear commitment to European defense.
- B. They are additionally unsure about the potential impact of the SALT talks on the balance between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in Europe.
- C. They are therefore unlikely to favor MBFR approaches which appear to them either to substantially undercut Western defenses or to detract from the deterrent effect of the NATO Alliance.

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VERIFICATION

I. With respect to verifying a mutual and balanced force reduction, studies are under way to determine our unilateral capabilities to monitor forces and areas which may be involved. These studies are not yet complete, but some conclusions are already evident.

A. Certain types of reductions would be easier to verify than others. For example, it would be more difficult to monitor reductions achieved by thinning out forces rather than those which reduce the number of identifiable units.

II. Verification of an MBFR agreement requires three stages:

A. First, force levels prior to reductions must be ascertained. This is a basic order-of-battle problem. Currently available monitoring and analytic capabilities are adequate to determine reasonably accurate active military strengths in the area of reduction.

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B. During the actual reduction phase, information would be required on the withdrawal or disbanding of units, and the size of the units involved. If our current studies indicate that present collection means are not adequate for this, some sort of negotiated on-site inspection may be necessary.

C. The third task--verifying the size and composition of forces after the reduction--is closely related to the problem of warning, in that both require the monitoring of forces and movement. In both cases, the most important consideration is the amount of time NATO would have to react to Pact activity.

1. At present, we believe that an agreement for mutual and balanced force reduction would not result in any reduction of the warning time which NATO now has.